

- Hello, real estate world. Welcome to the Nova Show, real estate records. This is Nuria Rivera, owner of Novation Title. I wanted to create the space for you guys to be able to share success stories,

but not only success stories, I also wanted you guys to be able to share raw stories. Everything that you have learned from the failures, the lessons, the wins. This is a space for our community to come together so that we can help each other rise to the next level.

This is a space to be vulnerable, and this is a space for us to all be able to support each other in this real estate world. Please enjoy this episode. - Hello,

and welcome to the Nova Show, real estate records. My name is Tristan Hammett, your host for today's episode. And today I have some really big shoes to fill because I'm here with Alma Merrill.

And he's a true legend in our Utah real estate community. He's not only a mentor, a captivating public speaker, and the undisputed Fisbo King.

- Of the world. - Of the world. But he's also the host of his very own show, Closer Cult. With over 20 years of industry experience, Alma is not just a realtor.

He's a positive force of influence in our real estate community. His passion for mentoring and empowering others in the industry has made him a true icon. Whether you're a seasoned pro looking to up your game or a newcomer eager to dive into the world of real estate,

Alma's wisdom and expertise are your keys to success. In this episode, we'll dive into Alma's journey, his insights on dominating the Fisbo market and the inspiration behind the Closer Cult podcast.

Alma's mission is to share the knowledge and tools you need to thrive in the dynamic Utah real estate market. - That was phenomenal. - You made me sound incredible,

thank you. - You are incredible, and that's why this is like a big deal today, because Alma, he really is, if you're not from Utah, Alma is really known in our industry, he's been in it a long time.

He's made a lot of connections, relationships, and he's made a name for himself. So it's a really big deal to be here, especially I listened to the Closer Cult.

(laughing) So yeah, thanks for being here. - Well, thank you for listening to mine. It's exciting. Thanks for having me on. I appreciate it. It's weird for me to be on this side of the mic.

Every time I'm on this side of the mic or people are asking me questions or I'm on a panel or something like that, it's always weird to me because I'm always so used to asking people questions on my show that thank you for having me.

I appreciate it. - No asking me questions. - We are diving deep into your life. - I do have some questions for you though first before we get started. No, I'm just kidding. - Oh, I was like, oh, it's already, just kidding. No,

no, no, not me, not me. - Breaking the rules. - Yeah, don't break any rules. Okay, so I want to start first. I've met Alma before in his wife,

Jennifer, his lovely wife, and you told a really moving story about your childhood and how you grew up. Do you mind sharing some of that?

I know it's a long journey, but do you mind sharing a little bit about that? - Yeah, not at all when we were at the coffee shop. Yeah, so, yeah, it was an interesting story. So growing up, I grew up in an interesting environment,

which is part of why I call my brand Closer Colt, is I grew up kind of in a coltish environment. Now, my parents didn't intend us to be in a colt, right? They just, the way they raised us was very fundamentally religious,

and so it was an interesting environment to grow up in, but on top of that, they also took additional steps with our education, meaning they kept us from getting an education, which was really interesting,

right? They, you know, long story short, I couldn't read till I was 12. I couldn't spell till I was 21 years old and living on my own,

and so there were some aspects to my life growing up that was very different, I think, than most people's lives, but what's so funny is that the most sacred things that I share with people,

the more people relate to those things. And as I've shared my story and talked about it, I've had people come out of the woodworks and be like, that's how I grew up. I had that similar experience or that same experience with education or,

you know, yeah, man, I couldn't read till I was, you know, 13, 14 years old or 10 or 12 or whatever. And, and the reason I bring it out is because I hid it almost my entire life.

I tried to hide from the truth. And I learned really well how to lie, you know, when I was in groups of people and they're like, Oh yeah, can you read this for us? You know, like a Bible study or something like that.

I'd be like, no, I got really good at just saying no, you know, and I was okay with the idea of no, like I won't do what you asked me to do. And I probably came across a lot as being kind of defiant or a little,

you know, whatever, a little turd. I don't know if that's a customer on your show, but I just, I just got really defiant in the process of growing up to where when I started to get jobs and stuff like that,

I would, I would lie about things, which is not what I read. I don't recommend that. That's kind of what you had to do because you probably felt it was normal to read and to write.

I did. Yeah. And then, but you didn't know how. So it was like, you had to lie. Like, yeah, you know, other kids your age are probably reading and writing, but you, you don't know how to. Yeah.

My parents, you know, bless, bless their soul. My mom's passed away now, but she was, um, she had a different way of looking at things, you know,

she, she would tell me things like, um, you can't read, you, you have a disability, you're disabled, you can't read, you will never be able to read like the other kids.

And what I found out later in life is when I was about, 12 years old, I'm sitting in my kitchen and I'm playing with a car or something on the kitchen floor.

And I remember being alone, nobody else was around me. And I had seven siblings, so that was rare. But I remember being alone and I'm playing with whatever it was on the counter or on the floor, I can't remember. And I remember looking up in the window seal at our house in this little town called DeVore,

California. And we were really, it was a really rural area where you lived off a dirt road, like, you know, distance from neighbors and everything. It was very interesting. That plays into probably why,

you know, a lot of my story, but I remember just kind of being alone. And I looked up at the window seal and I saw this Ajax cleanser bottle on the window seal. And I remember that was the first word that I read.

- Wow. - That I like put together was Ajax. And I was like, Ajax, Ajax, I can, I knew what it said before, but now I was reading it.

Do you know what I mean? Now I was understanding the A, the J, the A, the X. I was understanding how they went together and why they said Ajax. And that was the first word that I ever read.

And then I remember walking around like to different things in my house, like different boxes and cereal boxes and everything and reading every little three and four letter word that I could read in my house.

And I was like, wait a second. Mom said I have a disability. Mom said I can't read. Mom's lying. And that was the first moment that I like had this thought of like,

could she be not telling me the truth about my disability? I thought she said I couldn't read and now I'm reading. Mom was wrong. And so I started walking around and just reading all these things.

And then I was like, okay, if she was wrong about reading, is she wrong about spelling? Well, that was like hitting a wall. I tried to spell after I learned these things. And I just couldn't figure that part out because I didn't have phonetic training,

right? I didn't understand why a word would sound a certain way. And so I started after I started reading learning how to read at 12 I started just writing in my journal and I still have that journal to this day Yeah,

and all the words and all the let it everything is written completely wrong But I know what it says. Yeah still to this day I know what it says and I can read my words and and I can

remember just that the thought of going back in time and looking at That little journal and my my my pitiful,

you know handwriting And and and and trying to be like the other kids, you know was was It really kind of opens my eyes to what I don't want my kids to have,

you know To what how I don't want them to live And how and and it's really created kind of an importance of education In my life like education to me is very important now now.

I don't care if you go to a college I don't care if you go to high school as long as you're educated. That's critical I even think homeschooling either though my parents failed at it miserably I believe homeschooling is a really powerful tool because you can learn better in an environment that you're most comfortable with and So homeschooling is not a bad idea for a lot of people But I don't I don't homeschool my

kids Because I'm afraid to I don't want them to ever get close to not being able to read Write do math all those things And so yeah,

that's kind of the general like just of my my my story growing up. Yeah, I remember you telling saying Because we're driving by a school Or something yeah,

I'm said that's that's jail. It's prison for kids. Yeah prison for kids Yeah, and so that's yeah, like they're all locked in there. Yeah, that's what she'd say look notice how there's there's bars on the windows because in California like There's bars on every school every window,

you know and in San Bernardino where I grew up at Yeah, there's bars on a lot of houses, you know, yeah businesses. So that's But I didn't put that together what I put together was Wow,

these these schools they have bars on the windows to keep the kids in. Yeah, that's what I was told Yeah, and so all your siblings were Were they all told this yeah, we were all told that yeah And and so my my older siblings because I'm number six out of eight.

Okay. I always tell people I'm six down three up That's funny. It's supposed to be really funny. I'm not so funny So it's a dad joke for sure six down three up.

Oh So but I remember my older siblings. They actually were schooled. They went to I think they got as high as My oldest brother I think went to high school. Okay,

but he didn't graduate So he started his first like couple of years in high school when we lived in we moved from Um, Brigham City was where I was born tell us about five and then we moved to Ogden And then I was in Ogden till I was eight and then we moved to California.

So so when when we were in Utah I remember having the police knock on our door and I remember having school personnel Knock on our door because they're like,

where are your why aren't your kids in school? Yeah, and then I remember my Um parents would have these arguments with the authorities and with school like We're a private home school and we're doing it the way we want to do it We're raising our kids the way we want to raise our kids,

which I don't have a problem with that at all Yeah, as long as you actually do teach your children Yeah, and don't Keep them away from I mean can't Cannot not read and write right in your life.

Yeah, you have to have it You have to have those skills. - And I was told, look, sweetheart, you don't need to know how to do these things. As long as you're good with God and he knows your heart,

that's the most important thing in this world. And then I grew up and I'm like starting to get jobs and stuff. And I'm like,

I don't know how to do what I need to do in order to fulfill this job. - It's holding you back. - Yeah, yeah, ultimately. - Yeah,

and I remember my first job at, you know, 15 and a half and my first legit job, right? - Yeah, what was it? - Yeah, it was, I was a park attendant at amusement park. - Oh,

that's fun. - A ride attendant, yeah. - That's fun. - But before that, when I was little, I couldn't read or write, but I knew how to sell people. When I was little, I had this little push scooter.

When I was about 11 years old, I had this little push scooter and I took a milk crate and I put lawnmower wheels on it. I bolted lawnmower wheels to it and I would go door to door and I would sell products out of a catalog to people and I would have them fill out the form 'cause I didn't know how,

right? And I was little, I was 11, I mean, I don't know, I guess my 11 year old could do that all day long but she could fill it out and everything but she's 13 now, holy cow. But when I was 11,

I couldn't do that but I remember going and saying, hey, I'm selling these products, which one do you want? Go ahead and write down what you want on this form and then I'll go order it for you and bring it to you. And so I would make a commission off of it and so I learned at 11 years old that,

"Oh, I can make money doing this." And so the company was really cool. I could send cash in the mail, they would send me the product and my commission. - Oh my gosh.

- And so then I would go deliver it with my scooter and my little trailer and it was just household items like light bulbs and rugs and toilet paper and whatever, and I would just sell this trinkety stuff.

- It's so crazy to me that some people just like naturally have the sales and then other people, it's a skill that has to be learned and taught,

like, but it's just crazy to me. - Yeah, I've talked to a few agents, and not all of them, but a few, and it's like, it starts from the beginning, like very young, and it's like,

you just have this like entrepreneurial mindset, like it just naturally comes to you, it's so cool. - I think a lot of people, it does, you know, other people, they develop it later in life, and either one is fine,

but, you know, for me, it was young, for me, you know, my other siblings, they could give to, you know, about it, they could care less, I'm trying to resist the urge to speak in my native tongue,

but I'm doing good. - You are doing great. - I'm doing really good, hopefully you don't have to edit anything out of this, but I, like my other siblings, they just didn't care,

you know, they were fine just playing around, doing whatever, you know, and I was like, oh, how can I make money to buy that look candy bar, you know, or so it was like, when I saw something I wanted,

I was just like, how do I make money to go get this thing? 'Cause dad wouldn't give it to me, half the time dad was borrowing money from me, you know, there were eight kids in the family and dad was a construction worker.

And then the other aspect to that, a lot of people are looking at this and they're going, that was really terrible of your parents, but in reality, my mom was sick and my dad did the best he could. My mom was very sick,

my whole, well, most of my life, past the age of about five years old, she was pretty sick and she had mental disorder and she was drug addicted. And so she was stuck on opioids for years.

- Wow. - And then she got an automobile accident and she had an excuse to be on the medication. - Yeah. - And then, so for my life growing up from the basically the age of about 10 or 11,

all the way till, you know, my adult life, I didn't have really a very good relationship with her at all. 'Cause to me, all she was was just a representation of something I wanted to stay away from. - Yeah, she lied.

- Yeah. - And that's supposed to be somebody that you trust with everything that you have, you know, I get it. And for you to, you know, still talk highly of her though.

And, you know. - She gifted me life. - Yeah, yeah. - You know, I do, I honor my mom for what she was and what she gave to me. But I also don't want anybody else to have to deal kind of with what I dealt with with her,

you know? And she ended up being, you know, when my dad was at work she was highly abusive to me, verbally and physically. And so, I would just try to stay the freak away from her. Like,

I just wanted to leave the house. But she demanded that we stay in the house until 3/15. We had to stay in, so we were shut in until 3/15 because that's when the other school kids walked home.

And so, when the neighborhood could see the other school kids, then it was okay for us to walk outside. - Wow, wow. - And it was, and so, most of the time she slept past that time,

so we were able to get out of the house and get away from her and not be a target. 'Cause if she woke up before 3/15 and we were still in the house, it was do this, do that, don't do that, and we knew to have our chores done.

Like, we lived in a clean house for eight kids, it was clean, it was vacuumed, it was swept, it was trash was taken out, the counters were washed, like, everything was done because we knew if she woke up and those things weren't done,

it was absolute hell to pay. - Yeah, you were in trouble. - Yes. - Wow. So, thank you so much for sharing that. I know it's being vulnerable with us and I really appreciate it 'cause I know it's shaped you into the person that you are today.

So, how do you go from growing up, when did you leave your house, and how do you go from that, you know, that upbringing to who you are today and to like a successful real estate business,

a coaching business and-- - Great question, it was an interesting process. So when I was 15 and a half,

I got my first job, you can work in California at 15 and a half with workers permit. So after I did the sales in my wagon, I went up the street to this guy who owned this amusement park, and he was also my scout master in my religious organization. And so he told me, "Hey, I need somebody to plant trees in my yard." And so I went up there and for four bucks an hour,

I would go dig holes and plant redwood trees in his yard. So I landscaped his yard, and I worked my butt off. And he saw that as a benefit. And so he said, "The second that you're 15 and a half,

I'm giving you a job at my amusement park. If you can get a ride, I'll give you a job." And so I applied when I was 15 and a half. I got my first job with him.

And then I shortly after they turned 16, and I was there for about six years running rides. But my car kept breaking down, because you can't really afford a very good car at that age.

And it was also 30 miles away from where I lived. So it wasn't like, "Oh, I can walk down the street to ride my bike." Which actually, I did have to ride my bike a couple times, which was crazy. I would just wake up super early,

and I would get on this bike, and I would pedal at 30 miles down to Ontario from the war. Some determination for a 15, 16-year-old kid, I had to tell you. I didn't want to lose the freaking job.

I loved the job. It was communicating with people. I could be normal. I could be... That was the other thing too. I could be normal. And I look at it now, and I'm like, "You don't want to be normal.

You want to be able to stand out." But to me, I didn't want to be the weird kid who lived in the house that nobody saw. You had freedom. And I had freedom. Yeah. Yeah. And I got to talk to people.

And people took me at face value. And they gave me me, you know the the patrons of that environment people go to have a good time They go to have fun and if I was a part of them enjoying their life it really meant a lot to me as a kid and so Contributing to their life was really important to me and so I did that for about three years I couldn't hold down the job.

My car kept breaking down and so I It my I got a notice that I was gonna be let go and That that that day I drove down.

He said you just even though your car is running now I've given you plenty of notices. I've given you plenty of time. I've been more than fair I said you have you're right. I still love this guy to this day like he and I still communicate But he taught me a valuable lesson of in of accountability That even though it was tough even though I couldn't afford it.

It was still my responsibility To lose that job. Yeah, it was my responsibility to lose it or to keep it, right? It wasn't his it didn't fall on him.

My circumstances didn't equal his outcome So that was something that I learned right away. My the responsibility never falls on him. It falls on me No matter if I don't have enough money.

No matter it. It's still mine, right? Yeah, and so that day I left I went down to another amusement park that just opened up and I walk up to the secretary She's like,

hi, welcome to Pharaoh's. How can I help you? It's called Pharaoh's lost kingdom. It's not there anymore It's like they smashed it but back then it was there and neither is the other place Scandi of Family Fund Center It's not there either.

It's all buildings now, but So I go into Pharaoh's it's brand -new I remember the smell of the the carpet and the paint and the the woodwork and it was beautiful massive building and huge arcade and it smelled like Christmas morning when you open the packages and Yeah,

you just smell those new smells in the sense and the whatever and I was like, man This feels amazing right this brand -new beautiful place and I walk in and I said, yeah, she goes welcome to Pharaoh's how can I help you and I said hi I'm I'm here to speak to your own to the owner and she goes oh well he's not here right now and I said well what about the general manager is he here oh he's not here either but

the assistant general manager's here and I said okay can I speak to him and she goes well you have to have an appointment I said that's fair I'm I have no problem can I set an appointment she goes well you have to call in for that like well I said well I'm here can I just talk to him real quick it'll take two minutes she goes well let me ask him so I'm pushing her pushing her pushing her right and at this

point I think I'm I think I'm 18 or I was 17 I was 17 at this point so 15 16 17 yeah so I've just been at the park almost three years maybe two and a half years at the other place and then I was and then I was just I was like 17 or late 17 right okay years old so then um he goes hi he walks out he goes hi how can I help you and I'm like yeah I just had some questions for you he's like all right come

back to my office and so he walks me back to his office I still show you where it was today if this building wasn't destroyed um and it was and I go in and he goes what can I help you with and I said yeah I appreciate you taking my interview you he goes oh is that kind of is that what this is you know I said yeah assumptive closing and still think like still understand like I can't just fill out an

application I didn't know how I can't even spell wow I couldn't spell the street that I was on so I didn't know how to fill out an application right yeah and so I just said hey look I said um I did later my girlfriend at the time helped me fill it out later but this is how it went down I go hey I I just I want to come work for you this is a beautiful establishment I've been over this other place almost three

years like um and he goes oh you were over at Scandia and I said yeah and he goes really like so these two families know each other and they're in competition with each other right and so he goes well we would love maybe to have you what do you do and I said well I'm I'd like to manage the theme park and he goes wait a sec we don't just put people in as managers like you have to work your way up.

And I said, well, here's the great news. I already worked my way up at the other place. And I left there to come here and bring all my skills and all my knowledge. He goes, well, what do you know? And I said, I know this.

I know that people don't come to this amusement park to ride rides, hit golf balls and play games. And he gets this look on his face like,

huh? I said, they come to have a good time. And it's every employee's job to ensure that they do. And he goes, that's amazing.

Like, where did you get that? You know, that's amazing. You're right. That's exactly why people come. They don't come to do these other things. They come for the end result of which is to have a good time. Man, that's incredible.

- Oh my gosh. - You know where I got that from? It was the mission statement of the previous place that I worked. - Oh my gosh. It's hilarious.

- And so they fired me over there. - But like for real though, I've never thought to like think of that when I was that age. - I was desperate, right?

I needed a job. And I was desperate to not have him dismiss me and say, fill out this application. Cause I couldn't do it. And if he would ask me to do it right there and then I wouldn't be able to do it.

And so he goes, hey, in my book, you're hired. And he said, but here's the thing. I already have a manager out there. So you'll have to beat him out of his job.

- Oh. - And I said, I consider that to be a challenge. I'm down. Let's do it. And so he hands me an application. He says, get this back to me whenever you can. Cause we just need your information. I walk out within two weeks.

I have the manager position. - Oh my gosh. - They let this poor guy go who's in his fifties who was managing the park. - Oh my gosh. - And he was livid. Some little dumb little kid come in and take my job.

Blah, blah, blah, blah. And I just said, hey, and he and I were good friends when this happened. I said, hey, the good news is is you still, they didn't fire him. They just put him in a different position. - Yeah. Yeah. And he's like,

you're right. You're right. I said, Be, be, be glad. Be grateful. You still have a job. Some people wouldn't have a job. He's like, you're right. You're right. I'm like talking to my competition, you know, make them feel better.

And we maintained our friendship still as he worked there as the lead mechanic for the park. And then I took over as the, as the manager of the amusement park. That's what I'm saying.

Happens young. But you've just been, you've, this is natural to you. So, you know, I didn't have a choice, right? And when you're put into a situation where you don't have choices, it kind of, you kind of create your own way.

And so when I'm, so about, let's say about a year and a half, two years, about two years later, I'm, I go in and I talk to that same guy. And he was the nicest guy.

His name is Ron Woodhouse. And I just said, Ron, Hey, I got to tell you, I'm, I'm resigning. And he goes, What? Why are you leaving? What? No, we need you. Why are you leaving? You know? And I said, I've decided to go serve a mission for my church.

And he goes, wait, what? Wait, how old are you? And I said, I'm 19, almost 20. And he goes, wait, that means, that means I hired a 17 year old kid to manage my theme park. What did you ever tell me? And I said, it was all my application. Oh my gosh.

That is amazing. So that was my first like real, like shot out into the world. And I still, at that point, still couldn't even spell, you know, but. So how did you get to Utah,

back to Utah, and then into real estate? So what happened was, I served my Mormon mission. And then I came. Where'd you serve? In New Mexico.

Oh, okay. Yeah. And which was amazing. An incredible opportunity to serve people. I loved it. And I, then I moved back to California, or I came back to California afterwards and then all my friends went to college,

right, in Utah. And so I'm like, well, I can't go to college. I don't have a diploma. I don't have education. I don't have credits. I can't go to college. And so I'm like,

I'll just go up there to be social. So I moved up to Utah, got a job up there working at a medical company and then just delivering oxygen tanks to people and oxygen equipment and things like that,

doing home health care, you know. And so I did that for about three years. That got me a job up in Utah doing the same thing. And I started,

I had this, I came across this guy that he was doing through a friend. He was doing the world's largest pillow fight, like Guinness Book of World Records pillow fight.

And he's putting this together and I'm like, what is it? And I'm really social and I wanna know the people that do this type of stuff, right? So I'm like, I gotta know this guy. - Sounds fun. - Somebody introduces him to me.

His name's Aaron Browning. And Aaron Browning and I hit it off really well. And he was entrepreneur and I was entrepreneur. So we started a company called utoparties .com. And we threw these huge events together,

long story short, we threw these huge events together, fell in love with entrepreneurship again, even though I had these other jobs in between, fell in love with entrepreneurship. And I was like, but the problem with the company that we started,

we would have these events with 5,000 people there and we would market them and all this stuff and we would bring in, you know, \$80,000, \$90,000 a night, which sounds cool, but after expenses it was like we were making \$3 an hour.

And so I'm like, well, in order to make more money, I've gotta be more effective with my time. And so I met this girl in that and I fell in love with her and I married her.

And she was a broker's assistant to a real estate company. And she's like, you should go be a realtor. And I'm like, I can't, you know, I can't do it. I don't have an education, I don't have this.

And she's like, well, you can get all of that. And I'm like, well, I've never been in a classroom. Like I, you know, I can barely spell. I just learned how to spell, you know, two years ago, like a year and a half ago. How am I gonna do this?

- Read and write contracts. - Yeah. - Yeah. - And she's like, well, you can read, right? And I'm like, yeah. And she was very gracious. And that's one thing I'll give my ex -wife. She was very gracious when we first met, we were first dating and everything.

And she was very encouraging of me at that point. And so I was like, okay, like, she's like, you can do anything, I believe in you. I'm like, these are the words I need to hear, right?

- Yeah. - And so, which was opposite of what my mom told me. - Yeah, but you were, yeah. - Yeah, she's like, you can do it. I know you can. So she puts me through school, basically, and I get my real estate license.

And I get my high school equivalent, right? And then I'm like, I can, I can, I actually got through real estate school and passed the test the first time. - Wow.

- I had never done official math before, right? Before this process. I'd never been in a classroom scenario, right? Before real estate school.

And I had never understood how to put things together like contracts or anything like that, let alone an application for a job. I always had somebody help me with it.

So all of this I was able to do, put it together, pass my test, become professionally licensed. And I felt like, I felt like the world was at my fingertips.

I felt like at that point, I could literally do anything I wanted to. Because I had to overcome everything that I was positive that I couldn't do.

- Yeah, everything you were taught going up. - Yeah, you believe mom and dad, right? You believe them, whatever they tell you, you believe them. And I believed them. I believed mom, you know? And the funny thing was is she'd be like,

you can do anything. I remember her telling me this. you can do anything, I believe in you. And then she would say, but you can't read and you can't write and you can't do math 'cause you have a disability. So it was like feeding me these words but then telling,

but then physically taking it away from me. And bless her soul, I don't think she understood how sick she was. But what real estate taught me was,

yes, I can do it. And yes, I can accomplish those things. And yes, I can be successful. And literally everything that I had put my mind up to,

to my real estate test, the first test I'd ever had, legitimately for anything important, and I passed it. I passed the math,

I passed the questions, everything. And it changed the way that I viewed myself and what I was capable of.

- Absolutely. - Even though everything else told me I couldn't. And so I just started doing stuff that I didn't think I, you know, I guess. - If I can do this, then like what else?

- Yeah, I feel like it was somewhat naive to everything else. Like I'm like, I can do it, I can do this. I accomplished that, I can do this, you know. - Opened doors and your mindset changes. - Yes.

- Wow, that is such a powerful story. I didn't know that part. - Yeah, it was wild and it just, I was like,

"I can do what everybody else can do." And then some, maybe, that was my big question mark. And so then I'm like, "Okay, I'm gonna go kick butt "and see what I can do in my first year of real estate." And so I went from this other job being a truck driver and doing hauling oxygen tanks,

basically, to becoming a, and then I had another job hauling lumber to as a truck driver, right? Which takes no education, it just takes the driving skill.

And I remember just going into the office and making phone calls, 'cause that's all I knew how to do. I'm like, I don't have a sphere of influence, I'm from California. I have very few friends,

they're all college students, right? Nobody's buying houses, you know? And I'm like, I'm just gonna go make phone calls and find people that are already selling their homes.

Instead of trying to convince somebody to go buy, I'll just, they're already selling their house, that might be easy if I can convince them to work with me. So then I had this incredible mentor,

his name was George Morris. - Oh, we know George. - He was a huge mentor to many people. And I remember him, he was my very first broker. And I remember him telling me,

as a matter of fact, I was with him up until this last year, he was my broker for my entire career. And the only reason I'm not with him now is because I have other things that I'm now doing,

that he was doing back then. So I'm now mentoring and coaching people. And so anyways, so he told me that you can do this, get out there,

make the calls, get out. And he started holding me accountable for it. And he started telling me, like checking in on me every day, like how many calls did you make today? How many people did you talk to? How many appointments did you set?

How many points did you set? How many points did you set? How many points did you set? And I remember him just getting on me about it. And I was like, okay, I'll do it. And I just, I did it. And I didn't lack motivation at that point. I was actually highly motivated,

but you find excuses. You find other things to do. You know, you gotta sweep the house. You gotta vacuum the floors. You gotta, you know, so you're like,

there's other things you can put in there. Besides doing the work, and he would hold me accountable to the work. - So were you coming in the office every day? - Every day.

- Every day. - Yeah, he, I, - Were you individual or on a team at this, in the beginning? - An individual. - Okay. - And actually when I, right when I started this, this gal tried to get me on her team and I was about to go there and he goes,

no, don't do it. He said, you need to go start your own thing. Okay. And I was like, Oh, okay. He's like, you, you are going to be a leader and a trainer and a mentor.

He's like, you are going to be this person. You've got to go start this. He believed in me. Yeah. And I'm like, I believe in me because you believe in me, you know, and then you start,

it's wild. You start realizing that all these people are contributing to your success. Yes. You know, your ex-wife that's telling you, yes, you can do this. And you got George that's, no,

you are going to be a leader. You're going to do this solo. Yes. You're going to do this by yourself. Like then you start having all these people that really does make a huge difference. Yeah. That's the thing you look back and people, people like my ex-wife,

right? People look at scenarios and go, Oh, I wish I would have never married them. I'm never going to say that because if I wouldn't have married her, I might not have ever gotten into the industry. And then I might not have ever met George.

Actually, I know I wouldn't have. And then I might not have ever been able to live my dreams and create the future and the goals and the, and the stuff that I'm planning on doing now. Blows my mind.

Like the stuff that I get to go do now as a result of just simply making phone calls and learning how to talk to people on the phones has changed my entire world.

Yeah. Like my dad never made more than \$35,000 in a year raising eight kids. He said that was his biggest year in construction. And now my first year,

I made \$100,000, blew my mind. So about how, how long ago? So this was back in 2005, I think. Okay. It was when I started and,

um, and I just started making phone calls. That was it. I picked up the phone. I had a list of for sale by owners and expireds and I just started calling them. And when I first started,

it would take me a hundred phone calls or a hundred contacts to set one appointment. Wow. A hundred. - Wow, 100 phone calls to set one appointment.

- Yeah. - And that in itself has gotta be like, gosh, is this worth it? - Yeah, it was probably more calls than that, but it was 100 contacts. - Oh my gosh. - So you make a lot of calls where you don't contact somebody.

So 100 contacts to one appointment. - Oh, okay, like speaking to someone. - Yeah. - Yeah, oh, okay, yeah, I would feel defeated. - I would for days,

months, and weeks. - And that would make a lot of people wanna give up. - Yes. - So and obviously you didn't. - I didn't because I had George. - Yeah, you had someone believing in you in your corner, and then now you're doing cold calls live.

Can we talk about this? - In front of audiences? - Yes. Oh, you do it on podcasts, I've seen you on YouTube do it, and how do you get people that are upset that you're calling them to,

they're excited to work with you. - So I learned that there's only a few things that people are upset about when you call them. There's only a few things. And I learned that there's only a few things that you need to say to calm them down.

And so most of what I say is the same stuff over and over again to either defuse them or disarm their pain. Because what really, the reason why people are upset is they're usually in a tremendous amount of pain.

When people are mad, they're upset, they're frustrated, they're pissed off at the world, it's 'cause they themselves are in a tremendous amount of pain. And so if you can somehow alleviate that pain and then create an environment to where they feel safe with you,

they'll respond to you. And I started learning like, I-- - Yeah, how do you learn that? Like that is, I mean, is that from just being around the people that have helped mentor you?

Like how do you learn that that's how you need to communicate with people on the other phone that are trying to do for sales by owner? I always tell people your best teachers are the people that you're trying to get the business from.

So I learned actually from them from the home seller. I learned from them. They taught me more than anything. They taught me more than any script taught me. They taught me more than any mentor taught me about them.

And so what I what I started to do was I had these scripts, right? Where it was like, Hi, I was calling about the home for sale. Is this the owner? Oh, yeah, my name's Alma. I'm with blah, blah, blah. Can I share with you? You know, or,

um, you know, why are you selling your home or these things, right? These are those are scripts to ask questions. The problem with those is that it would take me a hundred of those to get to an appointment where somebody would finally go.

Yeah, actually, we're looking for a realtor. Come on over. And then what I realized is that I was like, wait a second. That was default. That wasn't skill. And so how can I be more skillful with my calls to where the the things I say invoke a an emotional response that causes them to be persuaded,

not manipulated, persuaded into saying yes, meaning it was a positive thing that caused them to want to respond to me in a positive light. And so what I changed was my tactic that I learned in those scripts was manipulation.

I changed it to persuasion. And I said, okay, how do I, how do I turn this from trying to convince them or coerce them into working with me to being convincing is okay,

coercing is not. And so I wanted to switch it to being persuasive rather than manipulative. Because and I was like, how do I do that? Okay, I have to change what I what the purpose is of the of the entire call.

My purpose went from I want commission. I can make 30 grand on this deal to I'm going to serve them no matter what. Yeah, I'm going to have a servant's heart.

And I'm going change my perspective on the way that I approach them. - And then did you see your business like? - Completely changed. - Completely changed. - I started to see my numbers change too. I remember seeing I would get higher end deals and I would close bigger stuff.

Because initially for years I would just go for the cheapest, easiest stuff I could get. And then when I learned how to talk to people, I'm like, I wonder if a millionaire would respond to this the same way. And so I started calling these millionaire houses and these million dollar houses and they started responding the same way.

And so I started to increase my per transaction production. And so it was learning from them. And I have all my scripts that I use now that don't feel like scripts.

When you were saying you saw me do some live calls and stuff like that on my Closer Colt YouTube, that's a script, but it doesn't sound like a script. - No, it doesn't sound like,

so the scripts that you were probably started on are the same scripts that all the other agents are using. This is more like, I heard this quote the other day and it's totally reminding me of you. And it's lead with need not greed.

- Oh, I love that. - Yeah, and it's totally like how your script changed. - Yes. - Right? You're leading with, they need me. How am I going to serve them?

- Yeah, and there were, it was little things, right? Like you'd call somebody up and say, you might have a really great intention, but if you call somebody else with a great, if you call somebody up with a great intention and you still call them and you say things like,

I was calling about the home for sale is this the owner? It's very non-connective. That's not, there's no connection there when you say, is this the owner? - Right. - To change that up and say, hey, hi, I was calling about, you have a home for sale? Okay,

I'm being inquisitive, inquisitive. And they say yes. And you say, and you're selling that for sale by owner, is that right? Yes, 'cause that's their first, their first objection is always,

no, I'm going to do it on my own. Well, fortunately, my name's Alma, I'm with ABC. Fortunately, the purpose of my call is we just sold a couple of other properties not far from you.

We being my brokerage, right? Just sold a couple properties, not far from you, not far from you being in that area, in that neighborhood, in that city, right? And I was just calling to get some information about your home.

Is that okay? And then I'm asking permission, whereas all the other scripts, I was telling them why I'm so good and why they should have me over there. And then I was trying to,

to leverage them somehow emotionally or, or through fear to get them to say yes to me. Like if you don't do this, you know, you're not going to have legal representation and a real estate agent can really help you through this process and help make you,

right? And these are on some of these scripts. And I'm like, that didn't help at all. People were like, get off my line. Like, I don't even want to talk to you and they'd be hanging up on me.

And so when I started to switch it from that manipulation to the persuasion of, Hey, if we could figure out a way that by working together, we could get your property sold,

get your family to New York, where you guys are going and net what you need to even after commissions. I mean, obviously you'd be open to at least exploring that,

right? Yeah, we would. And so I just changed the verbiage and the intention behind the entire language is everything. It is everything.

Yeah. It's so, it's a powerful tool. Yeah. So I give credit to those amazing mentors out there that created these scripts because they, they literally were the gateway to me changing them.

They were the gateway to me to finding out what didn't work and causing, and creating a script for myself and the people that I, that I mentor into success.

And so now, now I'll set three to four out of every five appointments that I, that I call or contacts that I make. That conversion is, I mean,

that just shows that what you're doing works. It's working. It works. And that's the thing is, that's not bragging. It's just factual. Anybody can do it. Anybody that I've trained on this,

on these methods, they actually do it. And that's why he can do it live. That's why I'll go do it in front of a crowd of people. I do it all the time. Yeah. I'm going down to Vegas to be on a show or to be at a conference on October 8th and I'm going to be doing it there.

And it's like, I don't mind doing it in front of 200, 300, 400, 500 people, a thousand people. I don't care. You know, I've done it in front of hundreds of people and it's in oftentimes I have people come up to me and go,

those were staged, weren't they? It was staged because you only called three people and you got two appointments. That was staged. You knew those people. You planted those people, right? No. I didn't plant them.

They're human beings selling their homes. I called them. That's all you got to do. They can feel your intention. And then I always ask this question. I'll ask it to you.

How do you know on the other side of the phone, how do you know if somebody's comfortable on the other side of the phone? How do you know if someone's comfortable on the other side of the phone? I get a lot of like,

you can, you can feel, you can feel that they're annoyed. Okay. Yep. So then you know, they're not comfortable when they feel annoyed, right? And what is there?

When they get annoyed, what do you feel? I feel like anxious, anxious, okay? And then when you get anxious, what do they feel? My anxiety. They feel your anxiety.

Yeah. And when you feel, they feel your anxiety, then what do they give back to you? Yeah. It's, no. Right. I'm not, I'm busy. Yeah. They feel your anxiety. They don't want any part of the conversation.

Right. Right. And so if you can change that, the best way to feel what somebody's feeling is how you feel inside. Okay. So you know that they are comfortable on the other end of the phone if you are comfortable.

Okay. And it happens instantly. it happens within the first Six seconds five seconds of communication. Wow, and you can change the entire way that that a Phone call goes just based on that first five or six seconds.

This is like an art Really, it really is. I mean and it takes the consistency to master This skill. Yes, and but also there's the big part of it is not coming From commission breath,

right, you know, yes coming from that other the other side of like truly wanting to help and And you hear people to say oh, it's a numbers game Okay,

nobody can deny. It's a numbers game if I sell a hundred homes. I'm gonna make a lot more money, right? Okay, but it's not a numbers game when you're talking to the human on the other end of the phone They are not a number,

right? They are a family. There's a reason why that you're selling There's a reason they're selling whether it's a marriage a divorce a move a Transfer a something and if you can connect to that Then you'll they'll feel it on the other end of the line like you said and they'll actually respond in a positive way And you can see how I do that and I always tell people just go online and do what I do Go look at my

videos and then go do what I do and People are go. They're so stuck in their head like it works for you, but it can work for me Well, they don't know who you are, right? You can be whoever you want to be on the phone for years when I was calling I was George Morris on the in my mind.

Yeah, I would say Alma Merrill But I would pretend to do what George did because George got fantastic results And so that you can be for them who they need you to be and I knew when I first started They didn't need some fresh wet behind the ears agent.

They needed a seasoned person to do it And I never told them I was seasoned. I never told them I had sold them, you know 500 homes, but they needed the comp and they didn't need the numbers.

They needed the confidence. They needed the caring. They needed the attention to detail. So all the things that a veteran agent would do,

they needed me to do those for them. And being a veteran agent means caring on the highest level possible. It doesn't mean I've sold 500 homes. That's not what that means.

Being a veteran agent means that I've worked with a lot of people and I've helped them the best way that I can. Right. Absolutely. Wow, that was some good stuff right there.

Thank you. That was awesome. I'm glad. Yeah. I hope it helps people. Yeah. And then so you have your Closer Colt podcast. This is the other thing I want to touch on before we conclude today's episode. Yes.

But the Closer Colt episode, you interview, it seems like it's mainly it's business owners, it's real estate agents and what was the purpose for you starting your own podcast show?

It was a calling. Okay. I just felt completely compelled to do it. And what was funny is I felt this compelling force like five years in advance.

And I went out and I bought all this podcast equipment and I bought these microphones and I set it all up and then I didn't do it. And for five years, that equipment collected dust and became outdated in my office.

And for five years, I rented a 11 by 14 studio that just sat there and never had one episode. Wow.

And I just knew that I was still being called to it. And so when I decided to actually take action on it and actually just pull the trigger and do it, I went to my equipment and I went,

this stuff doesn't even function with today's technology anymore. Oh my God. And so I got rid of all the equipment. I just put it in a box and shoved it into closet. And then I went and bought all of the correct equipment and started correctly and just went for it.

I just went for it. I created a list of people I was going to call and I just started calling them. Hey, do you want to come be on my podcast? And the first gala that I called, her name was Erin Maylor. She's an amazing agent up in Davis County,

dear friend of mine. And I said, Erin, I was called to have you on my podcast. She's like, what? Okay, yes, thank you. Oh, I would love to. And I was like, well, that was easy, right? - Yeah.

- People said yes. And one of the things like you and I were talking about earlier, people will say yes to being on their podcast. Like, notice I didn't ask you how many followers you have on your podcast. - Right. - I don't care. - Yeah. - I just want to share my story.

I don't care if I share it with one person. I still want to share it. - When you just never know who's listening. - Right. - And it might be that one person that's listening that needed to hear it that day.

- I had a guy come up to me after I was speaking at a conference and he was in tears. And he said, what you said today changed my entire. - I just got.

- And what I didn't realize is that he was suicidal. - Oh my gosh. - And he was on his last moments. And for whatever reason,

he was compelled to go to this event and listen to these speakers. And what I said, there were amazing speakers there. But something I said changed his life.

- Yeah. And it mattered. - And it mattered. - Wow. - And I was like, I don't care if it's that one person. I don't care if it's thousands of people. I want people to know what they're capable of and that they can overcome this stuff and that they can be great.

And that the dreams that they have are literally at their fingertips. They literally are at their fingertips. Just go get those skills and hone them in. You can do it all by yourself.

Nobody even needs to be there. You can hone it in. Make it your own baby and then go create your outcome of your life. life that's that's my message and that's my purpose behind the podcast now and one of the things though that we were talking about earlier too that's my purpose that's my mission right but the benefits blew my mind I didn't expect when I had Jimmy Rex on my podcast which is amazing friend of mine

we used to be really cutthroat competitors and we became really close friends because of it but Jimmy Rex was on my on my podcast and he said and you'll realize that above even just serving people it'll blow your mind how many connections you'll make how many amazing friendships you'll create and he said that's why I still do a podcast that he's like I I barely make any money on my podcast he said I do it because

of the connections that I make and the fact that most people will say yes when you invite them to be on a podcast yeah I was blown away by that like just right now I'm getting to know you even more you know like in depth right so it's it is okay it was a calling and you

don't even care how many listeners you have but it's like if you have yeah if you've touched and made a difference in one person's life that

day yeah wow and the value of that can't be measured no you can't measure that value you know today in society we're so focused on followers and you know all this stuff and I remember this kid who he was talking trash you know once you start getting haters online you know you've made it right that's what they say so he sends me this nasty message like blah blah blah you're this and that you're talking this big

game and you only have at that time I think I only had like maybe 300 followers or something on my Instagram and he goes you yeah you and your 300 followers right and I said hey if I can just touch your life and help you have a better day that I've made my I then I fulfilled my entire life's life's purpose.

And he was like, Hey, man, I, he, he hits me back. Hey, I appreciate that. I don't take it wrong. I shouldn't have said that. Yeah.

Come, come down a little bit, sir. Yeah. And it was, it was a lesson to him, right? Yeah. Like it, we need to realize that in this society when we're also focused on followers and likes and comments and all this stuff,

that it's important that the most important people I think are the ones that don't comment, that don't like, that are in a dark place, that can't respond. They're so frozen in their life. They're so frozen in their business.

They're so scared to do these things. I've been in those places in those dark holes where you're like, I'm so deep in debt. I can't even afford my house payment. I have to sell everything I own in order to stay alive,

to feed my family. You're, you're frozen by fear. I can't do this. I can't do this. I can't do it. Yeah. Those voices that drunk monkey on your shoulder, you know, that sits there and tells you,

you're an idiot. You can't do it. You're not worthy. You're not, you, you're not worth it. You can't have your dreams. That stuff is for the people who have the bazillion followers. No, that's not what it's about. It's about contributing.

And one of the things I found is that the best contributions or the best fulfillment I've ever felt was contributing to others. It's being, it's, it's selfish in the best way possible.

Yeah. Wow. Well, Alma, I wish I could talk to you all day long. I was looking at your 57 minutes on a podcast. All day long, I wish I could talk to you.

Um, and I mean, and speaking of followers, where can people go follow you and learn more about you and you reach more people.

Yes. So just go to closer colt with a Z, C L O Z E R. So closer with a Z and then colt C U L T. So that's on like a religious colt.

YouTube and Instagram. YouTube, Instagram. I respond a lot to Instagram. I have people hit me up on Facebook, but I just don't I don't I'm not as active on the on the business platform of Facebook But it's there.

But yeah, YouTube or I'm sorry. Yeah, YouTube Instagram Um, and those are the best ways to contact me and then you know A lot of people will when they have their conferences or their their monthly meetings for their companies or their quarterly meetings They'll invite me to come in and be a speaker and train a class,

you know, do a class like that Yeah, it's fun. You are rad. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate you and Yeah, that's it for today's episode and thank you to our listeners and thank you Alma again You're welcome.

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